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U. S. Department of Agriculture

FIRST CARE *of* BABY CHICKS



ISSUED BY THE
BUREAU OF ANIMAL INDUSTRY, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY DIVISION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

FIRST CARE OF BABY CHICKS.

KEEP BABY CHICKS WARM.

The first requirement of young chicks is warmth—a temperature comfortable for them. Chicks hatch in a temperature of 102° to 105° F. When brooded by hens they remain under the mothers nearly all the time for two or three days. Chicks shipped in small boxes are kept warm by the heat of their bodies so long as the boxes are not exposed to near-freezing temperatures, but this natural heat is not sufficient when they are given more liberty.

HAVE THE BROODER READY.

Buyers of chicks should have a brooder such as is required for the number of chicks bought *ready, warmed, and regulated* when the chicks arrive.

If, for any reason, the brooder is not ready, take the chicks from the shipping box in a warm room; feed, and return to the box; repeat at intervals of three hours until the brooder is ready.

For the first few days give very close attention to regulating the brooder for the comfort of the chicks. This is the most troublesome state in the operation of a brooder, and the most critical period in the life of the chick.

EMERGENCY BROODER.

Delay in delivery of a brooder sometimes puts a novice in a quandary as to what to do with chicks. A brooder for temporary use may be made as follows:

Take a box, without cover, about 18 to 24 inches square and 10 inches high. In one side, next the bottom, cut an opening 3 inches high by 10 inches long for the chicks to pass through. Protect this opening with a strip of cloth, tacked at the upper edge, having perpendicular slits from the lower edge to within half an inch of the top to give the chicks passage.

This box, covered on top with a piece of old blanket or quilt, may be used without heat when the outside temperature is 70° F. or over. For lower temperature a jug or a large bottle of hot water should be placed in the box and refilled as often as necessary to keep the chicks comfortable.

FEED LITTLE AND OFTEN.

Young chicks should not be fed for from 24 to 36 hours after hatching, and will not suffer if given no feed until the third day. The yolk of the egg, which is absorbed by the chick, furnishes all the nourishment required during this time. It is this provision of nature for the first sustenance of the chick that makes it possible to ship newly hatched chicks considerable distances.

At the start it is advisable to feed five times a day, dividing the day into equal periods and alternating a mash or soft feed, such as johnnycake, with a hard grain or scratch feed.

A MODEL VARIETY RATION.

Scratch mixture:

Cracked corn.....	5 pounds
Cracked wheat.....	3 pounds
Pinhead oatmeal, hulled or rolled oats.....	2 pounds

The above mixture when available makes an ideal ration. In the absence of corn, cracked kaffir corn, rolled or hulled barley may be substituted.

Feed morning, noon, and night, scattered in chaff litter.

Johnnycake:

Corn meal.....	5 pounds
Eggs (infertile).....	6
Baking soda.....	1 tablespoon

Mix with milk to make a stiff batter. Bake well.

or

a mixture of dried bread crumbs with hard boiled infertile eggs making about one-quarter of the mixture of eggs. Rolled oats may be used in place of the bread crumbs.

Feed in middle of forenoon and afternoon for the first 10 days or 2 weeks.

NOTE.—When infertile eggs are not available use double the quantity of baking soda, and add one-half pound of sifted beef scrap. Infertile eggs are those which have been tested out from sittings or from an incubator.

GREEN FEED.—Any tender green stuff may be fed to baby chicks. When a regular supply in quantity is needed, it is usually most convenient to use sprouted oats.

WATER.—Little chicks should be supplied constantly with fresh water, in either shallow pans or small drinking fountains.

HOT WEATHER HINTS.

Provision for keeping young chicks warm is always required. It may not be needed on the hottest days or during the heat of any bright day, but the chicks should always have heat available if they want it.

In extremely hot weather special care is necessary to prevent chicks from being overheated by exposure to the sun, confinement where ventilation is bad, or overcrowding. The brooder should be under shelter, with good circulation of air around it, and the number of chicks should not be greater than it will accommodate comfortably under hot weather conditions.

Skim-milk, either sweet or sour, and buttermilk are especially valuable feeds in hot weather, making the diet lighter without reducing its nutritive value. The milk should be given as a drink in vessels, from which chicks can take it without soiling one another with it. The use of milk does not do away with the use of water, which should be given as usual.

Unless the premises where chicks are kept and all appliances used are known to be absolutely free from lice and mites, and it is certain that chicks have never been exposed to them, it is a wise precaution to paint or spray the brooder with a mixture of 4 parts crude petroleum and 1 part kerosene, allowing it to dry thoroughly before using. Puffs of insect powder on the chicks when in the brooder, about once a week, will destroy any lice that may be on them.

Hatch

Standard Bred Chicks

Standard bred chicks are more uniform in type and color.

Standard bred chicks produce uniform products of superior quality.

Standard bred chicks require no more room, care or feed than scrubs or mongrel stock.

Standard bred chicks make better fowls. They mean more meat, more eggs, and better prices.

